



RURAL ADVOCATE

FALL 2005

Ruthie Mountain VFD Success Story

Arkansas Rural
Development
Commission

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Ruthie Mountain is a persevering community where neighbors take care of each other. Firefighters at the Ruthie Mountain Volunteer Fire Department do not get paid for saving lives. They do it because they care about their community and they believe in helping their neighbors.

In 2002 the Ruthie Mountain VFD in I zard County received a \$50,000 Rural Services Block Grant to construct a fire

station. Previously, the Department's equipment was stored in scattered homes, barns, and sheds. The nearest fire station was thirty minutes away, and that is not including the time needed to navigate through the rural landscape of forests and makeshift roads. Ruthie Mountain firemen knew the terrain and could save time and

lives if they had their own station.

Though they had very little funds, the Ruthie Mountain VFD was determined to provide safety to the surrounding areas. The volunteer firefighters trained vigorously in an



Ruthie Mountain Volunteer Fire Department's new fire station built with funds from the Rural Services Block Grant Program.

unheated building to learn first responder and rescue tactics. The Arkansas Forestry Commission helped the department acquire equipment, and surrounding fire departments donated their old equipment.

However, the Ruthie Mountain VFD desperately needed to construct a fire station to house the equipment and provide a

central location. Nadine Hicks, wife of Fire Chief Jerry Hicks, wrote in the grant application that their home served as the fire station office. Files and papers covered their den, while ledgers and treasury information buried the dining room table. They even had two fire trucks parked in their driveway.

Former Chairman of the Fire Department Board of Directors Darrell Morgan wrote in the grant application, "The importance of having a fire station in our area is beyond description...My wife Donna and I hope that we can have the protection and safety that people in protected areas have had."

The community banded together to raise funds. They raffled off pigs and held chili suppers and pie actions. Unfortunately they were unable to raise



During this time of Thanksgiving we would like to thank all of you for the work you do as county and city officials, legislators, rural firefighters and volunteers in rural Arkansas. We are proud to serve you, and we are committed to supporting rural citizens. Strength and determination are at the heart of rural Arkansas and we witness that with every project we fund. Thank you for your hard work rural Arkansas, and have a wonderful holiday season.

Bruce Campbell, DRS Director



Sam E. Angel II, ARDC Chair



(continued on page 2) enough funds for their project.

Mitzi Hargan and Lynn Haas from the White River Planning and Development Districts helped the community apply for \$50,000 from the Rural Services Block Grant Program. The application was successful, and Ruthie Mountain was finally able to accomplish its goal.

"We couldn't have [built the fire station] without the block grant," said Justice of the Peace Neil

Olan. "[The fire station] has helped bring the community together and gives people a sense of community and fellowship. We have put out brush fires and responded to all kinds of emergencies."

Arkansas has similar volunteer fire departments all around the state. The Rural Services Block Grant Program helps fund rural fire departments and community centers. In the words of Neil Olan, "How blessed we are in Arkansas to have so many volunteer fire depart-

ments."



**Rural Services Block Grant
&
Arkansas Rural Community
Grant**

Application Deadline

NEW GRANT TAKES ROAD LESS TRAVELED

When there is an emergency in a rural area, timing is crucial. Fires blaze from field to field engulfing farm lands and homes. It is essential that emergency responders be able to locate the site of the disaster. If emergency responders are forced to rely on outdated road maps and patchy directions time is wasted and lives can be lost. This can happen in rural Arkansas.

The Arkansas Geographic Information Office (AGIO) found duplicated and incorrect road centerline files around the state. Road centerline files provide accurate geographic positioning, road names, and address information. Emergency crews rely on road centerline data to locate the correct address in an emergency. This information also helps officials regulate voting and school districts, ensure accurate road maps, and aid routing services. "The centerline file has many other uses like serving as a display on modern floodplain maps, economic development and by helping people find their way around using updated and accurate road maps," said Shelby Johnson, Geographic Information Coordinator for AGIO. The AGIO developed the Arkansas Centerline File (ACF) Program in 2004 to provide correct and updated Arkansas geographic information.

Arkansas counties put together their own centerline files, and the ACF Program formats all of the information into one large database open to the public. The ACF Program also provides counties with the technology to maintain their data at the local level.

The problem is that many counties in Arkansas simply do not have the resources to create their own centerline information. At the current rate and without additional resources

available to help, the AGIO forecasts that updated and correct statewide data may not be completed until after the year 2010.

To accelerate the completion of road centerline data, the AGIO, the Arkansas State Land Information Board (ASLIB), the Chief Information Officer, the governor's office and the state legislature collaborated to pass Act 1800 of 2005. This Act appropriated \$750,000 for the Arkansas Centerline File Grant Program. The new ACF Grant provides funds for counties to create accurate, statewide road centerline datasets. The overall goal is to create road centerline data for as many counties in the state as possible.

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Sebastian County Judge David Hudson, Vice-Chair of the Arkansas State Land Information Board said, "This grant will serve a lot of counties that need this information built. This project will help public safety and economic development and I am very proud to have been a part of developing this grant."

Funds are awarded on a cost-per-mile figure based upon county mileage totals reported by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department. A county is not required to match such funds but must provide any additional funds the project requires.

For a county to be eligible, the majority of citizens within the political subdivision must have voted to levy an emergency telephone service charge for E-911 service following Arkansas Code 12-10-318. Offices wishing to apply for a grant under the program are required to apply through their County Judge's office. The next deadline is March 1, 2006.

For more information on the Arkansas Centerline File Program Grant call AGIO at 501-682-2929 or visit their website at www.gis.state.ar.us.



Rural Community Grant Program Fiscal Year 2006 Cycle I Grant Recipients

*The RCGP funds community development and fire protection projects. Communities with less than 3,000 in population are eligible to apply for up to \$15,000 in matching grant funds. Communities must match half of the amount they are requesting. The match can be comprised of in-kind labor, in-kind materials, or cash and must be available at the time of application.

| <u>Applicant</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Big Flat | Baxter | Community Development | \$3,183.00 |
| Calion | Union | Fire Protection | \$9,052.00 |
| Clarendon | Monroe | Community Development | \$9,614.00 |
| Compton | Newton | Fire Protection | \$3,500.00 |
| Egypt | Craighead | Community Development | \$15,000.00 |
| Halley | Desha | Community Development | \$6,500.00 |
| Hartman | Johnson | Fire Protection | \$3,804.00 |
| Hicks | Little River | Fire Protection | \$5,742.00 |
| Lakeport | Chicot | Fire Protection | \$15,000.00 |
| Lincoln RVFD | Washington | Fire Protection | \$10,168.00 |
| Marshall | Searcy | Fire Protection | \$15,000.00 |
| Maysville | Benton | Fire Protection | \$12,273.00 |
| New Blaine VFD | Logan | Fire Protection | \$15,000.00 |
| New Hope | Pike | Fire Protection | \$15,000.00 |
| Point Cedar | Hot Spring | Fire Protection | \$9,550.00 |
| Unity-Frost Prairie | Ashley | Fire Protection | \$6,000.00 |
| Ward | Lonoke | Community Development | \$5,098.00 |
| Weeks | Scott | Community Development | \$2,862.00 |
| Wooster | Faulkner | Community Development | \$4,320.00 |

Total: \$166,666

County Fair Building Grant Program Fiscal Year 2006 Grant Recipients

*County fairs located in counties with a population of less than 55,000 are eligible for up to \$4,000 per fiscal year for construction, renovation or general improvements of county fair buildings or purchase of items shown to directly improve the building or the services that the county fair association may provide. Communities must match half of the amount they are requesting.

| <u>Applicant</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Ashley County Fair Association | Ashley | \$4,000 |
| Carroll County Fair Association | Carroll | \$4,000 |
| Crawford County Fair Association | Crawford | \$4,000 |
| Dallas County Fair Association | Dallas | \$4,000 |
| Drew County Fair Association | Drew | \$2,000 |
| Johnson County Fair Association | Johnson | \$4,000 |
| Montgomery County Fair Association | Montgomery | \$4,000 |
| Newton County Fair Association | Newton | \$2,000 |
| North Franklin County Association | North Franklin | \$4,000 |
| Pope County Fair Association | Pope | \$4,000 |
| St. Francis County Fair Association | St. Francis | \$2,583 |
| Van Buren County Fair Association | Van Buren | \$4,000 |

Total: \$42,583

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SERVICES

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"Striving to Enhance the Quality of Life in Rural Arkansas"

Earthquake Tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency

Before an Earthquake:

- Hold earthquake drills with your family members: Drop, cover, and hold on!
- Create a disaster supply kit with food, water, a first-aid kit, and important family documents.
- Bolt down and secure to the wall studs your water heater, refrigerator, furnace, and gas appliances. If recommended by your gas company, have an automatic gas shut-off valve installed that is triggered by strong vibrations.

During an Earthquake:

- Take cover under a sturdy desk or table and hold on. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside.
- If you are in a moving vehicle stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle.
- If you are trapped under debris cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing. Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Shout only as a last resort as you can inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

After an Earthquake:

- Be prepared for aftershocks. These secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage to weakened structures.